

QR Activity Sheet



Community Design Matters

Community Pride Projects

Instilling the importance of civic engagement at a young age is important. Civic engagement involves “working to make a difference in the **civic** life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference”. To encourage youth to understand the importance and impact of civic engagement, DIVAS for Social Justice in partnership with RGPA Studio provided a free six week community mural workshop to the students of P.S 156 in 2016. The goal of the program was to create a mural that would celebrate the beauty and pride of Laurelton. Students learned initially how the community of Laurelton was marketed as the “garden community” because of all of it's beautiful greenery in the mid 1950's. When the neighborhood changed in the mid 1970's and there were more African American families, the beauty of the community remained and is still thriving today. The

students of P.S 156 were given the charge of photographing the different flowers in the neighborhood with cameras and smartphones. After reviewing the photography they decided collectively which designs would be highlighted on the wall. The design of the mural was a two part process. First, the students were responsible for priming the wall and creating the color blocks. The organizations provided all of the supplies under one condition: Youth were charged with the responsibility of inviting one adult to participate in the mural design.

May 7th, 2016 the students painted and primed the wall. At first they were initially shy about painting but as they started to paint they received love and encouragement from community residents. The mural is located at 225th street by the LIRR. As cars went by they would honk their horns and scream out “ Good Job!”. The youth felt extremely proud and connected the importance they were making in their community. After the priming of the mural, the final design day was set and the number of participants tripled. Twenty 4th and 5th graders moved almost 30 adults to come and participate in the final design of the mural. The Laurelton community showed up to support their community project. The Principals and Teachers of P.S 156 showed up to support the mural. Councilman Donovan Richards supported the mural and brought his toddler son to the event. The Federated Blocks Of Laurelton also showed up to support the mural design , a civic association working in the community over 30 years to improve the lives of people from Laurelton.

The simple act of capturing a flower with a smartphone and painting a wall brought together an intergenerational group of people beaming with community pride led by 4th and 5th graders.

What does community pride mean to you?

Record your answer using your mobile device's Voice Recorder. Send your audio message to: community@divasforsocialjustice.org